

Inclusive university: perceptions of those responsible of support services for people with disabilities one

*Odet Moliner García**

Abstract

This article presents the results of an investigation carried out in three universities in Spain, Colombia and France on the perceptions of the staff of support services for people with disabilities in the university. It is a descriptive study in which, through individual interviews, academic directors and service technicians express how they understand their practices in relation to the support they provide to students and teachers from the analysis of three dimensions: a) culture , b) policy and c) inclusive practices in the university. The analysis of the results reveals the barriers and strengths found in their work. It concludes with a series of challenges that guide future actions in each context.

Keywords : Support services, disability, higher education.

Introduction

In compliance with the right to inclusive education, article 24 of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 establishes an inclusive approach in all levels of education in the education system. Therefore, institutions of higher education must ensure access, permanence and timely graduation with reasonable adjustments, effective training, the goal of full inclusion, full participation and equal conditions in education and lifelong learning . From then on, each country implements a set of policies assuming the ratification of the article.

In the case of Spain, the reform of the system following the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), raised as one of the quality indicators the equal access to higher education for people with disabilities. Since the Organic Law of Universities 4/2007, specifically from the twenty-fourth additional provision, it describes what should be the inclusion of people with disabilities in universities. In addition, Royal Decree 1892/2008, of November 14, which regulates the conditions for access to official university education, maintains this philosophy in its texts making the attention to diversity in the Spanish university is clearly regulated for its operation.

In France, the law of February 11, 2005 for equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities, organized the policy of schooling of students and students with disabilities. Article 20 of this law refers directly to universities and obliges them to guarantee students with disabilities or with a health or disability problem the same rights as

the rest of the students. Subsequently, a first University-Disability Charter was signed in 2007 between the universities, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of Labor, Social Relations and Solidarity. Five years later, in May 2012, a statute was signed that establishes a disability inclusion policy and guarantees equal opportunities for students as individuals regardless of their status.

In Colombia, the state ratifies the right of persons with disabilities with Statutory Law 1618 of 2013, which in article 11 projects access to higher education, vocational training, adult education, education for work and education. learning during life. By this law, the Ministry of Education issues the guidelines for inclusive higher policy in 2013 for all educational institutions at a higher level through a differential approach.

Thus, the inclusion of students with disabilities in universities is a relevant social fact that has become an object of research in the international arena. The work of Douchet, Aubree and Mabaka (2013) offers an interesting comparative table of inclusion policies in universities around the world, taking into account the results in Europe, America, Asia and some African countries. However, numerous studies (Leyser, Greenberger, Sharoni and Vogel, 2011, Moswela and Mukhopadhyay, 2011, Prowse, 2009, Riddell and Weedon, 2014, Shevlin, Kenny and Mcneela, 2004) show that universities are sometimes not sufficiently prepared to include all students from an inclusive approach.

With regard to the specific situation in France, it seems to be an issue absent from the concerns of the researchers, with some caveat of some empirical work on the subject (Grosstephan and Philippot, 2015), which connects the devices developed in universities and practices of the actors in a case study. Also an institutional report of the General Inspectorate of National Education and Research, of 2006, offers a critical evaluation of the results of the policies implemented.

In the Spanish context, some previous studies have been carried out (Castellana and Sala, 2005; Moriña, Cortes-Vega and Molina, 2015) conclude that the classrooms do not have the necessary resources to favor inclusion, the teaching staff does not teach the classes using the appropriate methodologies so that they can participate fully in them, making it difficult for students with disabilities to participate, progress and succeed in college.

In Colombia there is an increase in interest in this research topic based on the Guidelines on Inclusive Higher Education Policy of the Ministry of National Education in 2013 and some works proliferate, such as Yarza, Rojas and López (2014) and the project called "The educational inclusion of people with disabilities: policies and practices in higher education. Comparative study between the Catholic University of Córdoba-Argentina and the Los Libertadores University Foundation-Colombia "whose objective is to identify the impact of inclusive educational policies and practices established in higher education processes for access, permanence and graduation of populations with disability (Rodríguez, 2015).

That is why the role of support services in the promotion of inclusive universities is fundamental. These services, programs and care units are characterized by their heterogeneity

and the performance of their functions varies considerably from one context to another, even within the same country (Alonso and Díez, 2008). Its competences include acting as mediators between students and faculty, guiding and supporting students and teachers, raising awareness and training teachers and ensuring the necessary adaptations and adjustments for the permanence and progress of students. Thus, they play their role in three domains or dimensions that are central to the development of the inclusive approach (Booth and Ainscow, 2002):

Inclusive culture referring to the inclusive values shared by the institution. The principles that derive from this university culture are those that guide the decisions that are specified in the policies.

Inclusive policy referring to the institutional organization: regulations, services and resources available in the institution that guarantee access, participation and learning for all students.

Inclusive practice more focused on the teaching action. It includes a cross-cutting approach to the principles of DUA (Universal Design of Learning).

Those responsible for support services work closely with policy makers, students and faculty, and articulate the resources and conditions for each institution to develop a more or less inclusive culture. However, as some authors remind us (Borland and James, 1999; Moriña et al., 2015) the university environment can be in some cases incapacitating. In this sense, this research aims to contribute to the study of the articulation of cultures, policies and inclusive practices in the university, focusing on the perceptions of professionals in support services.

II. Method

We present an empirical study on the perceptions of those responsible for support services for persons with disabilities in the university on the development of inclusive education in higher education.

In the Universitat Jaume I the Educational Support Unit (USE) has been working since 1992 as a service that aims to provide a personalized and efficient response to the needs of students and teachers. It is structured in four areas: information, guidance, teacher training and educational innovation and the Diversity Attention Program (PAD). The latter focuses on working with people with specific educational needs and their entire university educational environment (teachers, fellow students, physical environment, social, cultural and educational environment). Specific educational needs related to auditory or visual sensory disability, reduced mobility or motor disability, as well as chronic diseases, psychological or psychological problems and difficult personal situations of temporary disability (fractures, operations, rehabilitation ...) are considered. that directly affect the study or academic work.

In the Los Libertadores University Foundation, in 2013, the Program of Permanence and Early Graduation (PYGO) was launched as a strategy to ensure that all students can

complete their professional training with relevance. For this reason, a system of alerts was established that identifies the risk conditions for desertion at an economic, family, emotional and academic level. From 2014 to 2016, along with the Bachelor of Special Education -and in order to strengthen the care of students with disabilities and remove learning barriers-, the Inclusive Higher Education Policy of the Foundation was developed. With it arises the need to generate the mobility of thought towards an approach to inclusion as a systemic process that enables coexistence and diverse learning, as well as the articulation of resources and programs.

At the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA), in 2008, the inclusion policy was implemented from a disability approach, directed by an official assigned by the rector and a Disability Service coordinator (SAD). It also has a person responsible for the quality of working life, a reference for workers with disabilities in the URCA , attached to the Department of Human Resources. The policy is aimed at both students and staff with disabilities at the university.

This research aims to analyze the perceptions of academic leaders and technicians who manage diversity services in the three universities involved, as well as the perceived challenges posed by inclusion that can be improved. We opted for a qualitative approach, specifically a descriptive study made from the data obtained in interviews, which were carried out individually, after signing the informed consent.

The instrument used was a semi-structured interview script that consisted of three sections: a) contextual data, b) data from the informant and c) 35 questions grouped by indicators on three fundamental themes related to the concept of inclusion and the values of the institution (dimension A), policies, structure and organization (dimension B), and inclusive practices (dimension C). Finally, an open question was launched about the problems or challenges perceived as most pressing. The interviews lasted about an hour and a half and were literally transcribed.

The sampling of the informants was non-probabilistic and intentional, as they were selected experts as relevant sources of information. The participants were 13 professionals, with a very variable experience depending on the position they occupied in the service.

The data were analyzed from the reduction of the literal transcriptions of the interviews in units of content (Sabourin, 2009). Through a categorization process, the content units were assigned to each of the subcategories that made up the three dimensions. Therefore, the process of content analysis has been deductive in terms of the agreed indicators for each dimension being investigated.

III. Results

3.1 Perceptions of those responsible for support services at the Universitat Jaume I

On dimension A (Culture), the informants start from a clear definition of inclusive education as one that focuses on the student: "Taking into account the particularities of each of them so that everyone can participate fully, making decisions and being in the space that corresponds ... "(E2). They also consider that it aims to "give equal opportunities to all the students that the university has (E3), and that also poses as" a meeting point in an educational context, in which attention to diversity It must be present at all levels, from the organization of the center to the teacher training and to the educational practice in general (E1).

They also consider that inclusive education is contemplated "on paper", that is: "The educational model of the UJI it does contemplate the possibility of serving the student with needs "(E3), and that awareness is made through courses, conferences, a radio program of the university and with social networks.

Referring to dimension B (Politics), are proud that this university is a pioneer in the Spanish state by introducing in its statutes (in 1992) support for people with physical, mental or sensory disabilities : " We were innovative, because we were the first university that contemplated all aspects and situations "(E2).

Regarding the conditions of access and detection of students can be several situations: "a) that is a person with disabilities and therefore, at the time of enrollment, has free registration. Thanks to the centralized management system, students automatically appear in our register and in the database; b) a student who does not have a disability and does not have a certificate, but he comes to tell us that he has a certain situation, a chronic illness, a ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder] for example, a depression, whatever ... then we incorporate it at that moment; and c) a detection in the classroom, that is to say, that the teachers refer it to the service "(E2).

They give direct attention to about 300 students and in some cases positive discrimination measures are applied: "For example, in the library there is a blind booth where they can work with specific programs to read documents" (E1).

They emphasize the collaborative culture and work with other entities, especially with service networks such as the one of SAPDU (Support Services for Persons with Disabilities in the University) and UNIDISVAL (Services of University Disability in Valencia). There is also great collaboration with other internal services of the university: "We work with the Sports Service, with Academic Management, in the issue of registration we are there, in selectivity we are part of courts, with the Practice Office we have created a working group ... now with mobility too, with the Computer Service "(E2). Also with the OCD (Office of Cooperation and Development) because they have volunteering ... in this we have no problem, on the contrary, we need 3 and 20 are presented "(E1).

However, on coordination, they consider that: "There should be some kind of program on the subject, global of the university, that would coordinate all of this" (E3). In addition, it collaborates with associations and External NGOs : "Like ONCE, Telefónica, Vodafone ... the association of ADHD , with Frater Castellón who are physicists ... "(E2).

Regarding academic guidance, they offer: "Accompaniment of students who have had poor performance and inform teachers according to the problem and the need they have for support in the exam (...) referral to psychological assistance, if applicable (...) helps level of time organization and study techniques "(E2).

In terms of accessibility, the web and physical accessibility are guaranteed by being a newly created university. The specific resources are obtained through an external foundation, Universia: "We have bought computers and two stations FM because we have two students with auditory problems "(E2).

In the dimension C (Practices), it is considered essential to improve teacher training on inclusion, because: "It is transversal and mandatory in the preparation of curricula" (E3).

There are accessibility guides and transversal content within the different degrees but more work is done at department level when the concrete need arises: "And we say that it is training but it is not recognized training in the training plan and that stays in meetings, but that is formation "(E2). For example: "At the beginning of September we contacted the director and we told him: You have a student with Asperger and the characteristics are explained ... I think we have to do it from each case in petit committee or through a more direct action with that teacher ... "(E1).

It is considered necessary that the new teachers have a compulsory education: "An introduction to what people with specific or special needs are ... some minimum data ... is that there are 300 students and one can touch you. They should also know who to turn to and how "(E2).

3.2 Perceptions of those responsible for the services of the University Foundation Los Libertadores

On dimension A (Culture), in this context there is an awareness of the approach to the right to education, but when defining inclusive education, the options given by the interviewees have to do directly with disability: "It is to care for people who are disabled or with an illness" (E4). Thus, it is evident that the social imaginary continues to be that of a person with difficulties and from corporality, where "a group is homogenized and others are excluded" (E8).

In the Libertador Institutional Educational Project (PEIL) the concept of integral formation of the subjects that integrate the community from the ethical, moral, aesthetic, social, political, physical, artistic, intellectual, cultural, religious, productive dimensions with capacities and potential as a human being (PEIL , 2008). Therefore, by relating the principles and the conception of person that one has at the institutional level, one thinks about the fairness of opportunities to guarantee the right to education in the different education programs offered. This has allowed that from the beginning of the educational attention to populations with visual disability (2), auditory (2) and Asperger's Syndrome (1) in educational programs of Bachelor in Special Education and Graphic Design.

The recognition of the concept of inclusion is given only to the group of students that require adaptations to meet their objectives and that "the teachers send them when they do not have the competences for their academic space" (E6). Although they point out that if it were recognized that "there are multiple ways to learn, as there are multiple ways of being, it would be possible to speak of inclusion" (E8).

Referring to dimension B (Policy), the interviewees are clear that there is a national legislation that protects the right to education and as a private entity has tried to ensure that all students who access the foundation receive quality educational attention, therefore processes are established for permanence. However, until November 2016 there was no institutional policy: "We all have actions that allow us to guarantee that a student can graduate in a timely manner overcoming learning or economic difficulties and in many emotional cases, but is not institutionalized as inclusive education or inclusion policy (E7) ".

In the access it can be evidenced that the enrollment is not restricted by conditions of the applicants: "They simply enter the program through an interview and sometimes a specific test that does not qualify but serves to guide the process of the new student" (E5).

However, "there are no mechanisms to support the entry of students who are deaf or with any condition" (E4), although "the alert system does allow identifying the group of students that requires support in psychology, psychopedagogy, social work, and progress has been made in the referrals thanks to the advising professors of each program "(E4). It is detecting a problem related to the social, emotional, economic or learning, because it is a situation that increases every semester and, in addition, "each time students arrive with greater requirement in support in reading, writing and even in making of decisions "(E5).

Referring to dimension C (practices), questions are asked about whether there is only one way to do the training process, because when reviewing the programs they ask "what to do with the one who can not memorize, how to do the classes if he does not listen to me and if it is literal "(E8). They consider that to look for answers, the essential thing would be to "know the student" (E4), that is, one of the best practices is when a teacher identifies the abilities of his students.

3.3. Perceptions of those responsible for the support services of the Université de Reims

Regarding the dimension A (Culture), the term inclusion is unknown by the informants and they affirm: "it is a word that I do not understand much" (E11), but they relate it to "the reception of students with disabilities so that they can follow their training [as well] a possibility to give equal opportunities to students with disabilities "(E11), and consider that it is more an individual action, a moral attitude that leads them to help students who have specific difficulties rather than an institutional policy. In the French context, where universities do not practice selection, respondents are sensitive to the notion of equal opportunities (the term most used during interviews) instead of the "assessment of diversity".

On dimension B (Politics) consider that organizational issues are channeled through the Disability Service (SAD), which "network" (E10) within the framework of a national association, which develops (with the different ministries involved) the investigations And the information. The Disability Service of the URCA It deals with 177 students. More than half (52%) have a pension and more than three-quarters (77.9%) have adaptations in exams (they have more time than the rest).

In recent years the number of students with disabilities has been increasing: "In 2012 there were four or five students per faculty and now they are from twelve to fifteen each year" (E13). Students with disabilities already receive information about the disability service from the institute. Therefore, they are already in contact when they enroll and then a personalized plan is made based on the examination of their situation by a committee composed of medical, social and teaching staff. The service notifies the heads of each faculty, although this is not always the procedure, since, in some cases, the students are discovered by the faculty. Regarding the collaborative culture, there is collaboration between the teaching staff and the SAD informing the faculties of the enrolled students if it is necessary to provide adapted resources as in the following case: "We had a problem because the first years we look a lot through the microscope. The service acquired a camera to connect it to the microscope, so that the student can look without fatigue "(E13).

There is no mention of collaboration among the faculty of students with disabilities, although several examples of student collaboration were mentioned. For example, one of the responsible says: "This year, for the first time, the students have contacted me saying: we are in a good group that works well and that there is a student with difficulties and we take turns with her in function of the classes, because some are difficult ... "(E11). In terms of accessibility, as required by law, efforts have been made to guarantee the physical accessibility of old or recent premises, although there are still problems, such as "steep slopes in the ramps or delays in the repair of elevators" (E9)

Referring to dimension C (Practices) state that it is not frequent for teachers to modify their teaching practices and justify it in equal treatment for all students, which represents a difficulty for some severely affected students to continue their studies. The content of the exams is not adapted, but some adaptations are frequent, such as: "It has an extra time, that is, two hours have 40 more minutes" (E13). Regarding teacher training, the question of whether training for the reception of students with disabilities is necessary, they respond with evasive words: "Why not about the ideal?" (E12); "It would be good to know how to react to students with disabilities" (E13) but insist that it is a personal attitude and do not see the need for a particular pedagogical training.

IV. Discussion and Conclusions

Support services have an important role for institutions to develop an inclusive culture. But for this it is fundamental that they assume the conceptualization of inclusion. In this sense, the staff of support services is situated in three very different positions. In the Universitat Jaume I

it seems that the theoretical definition is clearer alluding to the particularities of the people, to the right to equal opportunities and to the need to articulate the resources and the educational response in relation to the teaching practices, even though The development of practical proposals is closely linked to the model of special educational needs. In the context of Los Libertadores and the Université de Reims, conceptualization is associated with people with disabilities, as people with difficulties, more typical of the integrative model (Thomazet, 2015). These results lead us to the first challenge: the clarity of the definition in relation to the idea of inclusion, which is a challenge of an international nature supporting the idea of welcoming the diversity of all students. The aim is to eliminate social exclusion, a consequence of attitudes and responses to the diversity of race, social class, ethnic origin, religion, gender and abilities, from a broad concept of inclusive education (Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton 2000; Weber, 2005).

This approach leads us to the second challenge of universities: How is the value of inclusion concrete in policies, strategies, processes and programs? In this sense, the results point to a greater normative concretion in the policies of the Los Libertadores Foundation, which makes explicit an objective of an inclusive university in its educational project, which will allow greater progress in the practical developments of the process. The same does not happen in the other two universities, in which the inclusion is not formulated explicitly but the regulations, plans and programs are focused on guaranteeing equal opportunities and serving the students "with needs".

In all three cases, reference is made to how support services facilitate inclusion in the university through the offer of specific resources, direct attention to students, awareness raising to the university community, a system (program) of centralized access that allows detection and support for students, great coordination with resources and external entities of an educational and social nature. However, in all three cases there is a need for more coordination between the services and internal programs of the universities themselves. This leads us to raise the third challenge: establish coordination mechanisms between different internal services that have as their object the inclusion and reception of students, particularly the most vulnerable.

On the other hand, the results also show some intangible barriers, such as attitudinal and pedagogical barriers. Among the first ones, the lack of cooperation of the teachers is mentioned to make the necessary adjustments, with which the fourth challenge would be in relation to the attitudinal change towards the ways of teaching of the university professors that, according to Bausela (2002), is the most difficult thing to change.

This is directly related to the barriers experienced by teachers in relation to their lack of pedagogical training. This is one of the points of greatest discrepancy of the study, because while some are inclined by a compulsory training of the novice teachers on general aspects related to disability, others demand an "a la carte" accompaniment for specific cases based on the singularities of the students, and even some do not consider it necessary. Regarding this aspect, we do not find any agreement in the literature either, while some authors propose a

training more focused on learning about disabilities (Barazandeh, 2005, Kraska, 2003), others propose courses to incorporate the DUA's approaches to university teaching. (Alba, Zubillaga and Sánchez, 2015), as well as the development of teacher innovation groups in which students are integrated to discuss their needs (Sarkar, 2016). In short, the fifth challenge has to do with the development of teachers' pedagogical skills, as an opportunity to innovate teaching strategies that enable higher education professionals to strengthen their practice from an inclusive pedagogical perspective.

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